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Viewing cable 07MANAGUA1043, NEW MOVIMIENTO DIRECTOR: CIVIL SOCIETY AND

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07MANAGUA1043	2007-04-24 15:38	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9929
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1070
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 001043

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/24/2017
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [NU](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: NEW MOVIMIENTO DIRECTOR: CIVIL SOCIETY AND
LEGISLATURE LAST BASTIONS OF DEFENSE

REF: MANAGUA 0871

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

11. (C) Summary: The new Movimiento por Nicaragua (MpN) executive director, Violeta Granera, is convinced that the Ortega government's apparent disorientation is a ruse to divert attention from the Sandinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN) clear plan to gain political and economic power and Ortega's demagogic desire to impose an autocratic, family dynasty under Venezuela's sphere of influence. Granera's priorities for the NGO include forming strategic alliances with like-minded NGOs and political opposition parties; training MpN leaders and other members in leadership, communications, advocacy, outreach, and development; establishing five centers in Managua and expanding operational presence in Nicaragua's remaining sixteen departments/autonomous zones; and, gaining long-term private sector and foreign donor commitment and support. Under her watch, the MpN will conduct a series of "social audits" of the Ortega administration and avoid politicizing its criticism. End Summary.

Don't Let Government Disorder Fool You

12. (C) New Movimiento por Nicaragua (MpN) executive director Violeta Granera, who met with PolCouns on April 18, is convinced that the Ortega government's apparent disorientation is a ruse to divert attention from the FSLN's clear plan to gain political and economic power and reflects Ortega's desire to impose an autocratic, family dynasty under Venezuela's sphere of influence. In Granera's view, the Ortega government is all about power and control and President Ortega is willing to serve as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's "lackey" in exchange for off-budget petrodollars that can be directed with no legislative scrutiny to feed the Chavez-Ortega project in Nicaragua. Granera explained that she had recently left her position as executive director of CONPES because the Ortega administration was uncooperative, warning that Ortega intends to turn CONPES into an instrument of the Ortega regime.

13. (C) Criticizing the mediocrity of Ortega's cabinet, Granera suggested that Ortega has deliberately appointed weak, ineffectual ministers. They are set up to fail; ultimately the government's traditional institutions will become mere shells, to be replaced by Ortega's national and citizens' councils financed by Chavez's money, she warned. Granera was unequivocal that Ortega seeks constitutional and

other legislative reforms to allow consecutive presidential re-election and postpone the 2008 municipal elections. Postponing the municipal elections will allow Ortega to create his parallel, party-dominated institutions and co-opt poor Nicaraguans, mused Granera. She speculated that Ortega will first get his "foot in the door" by making certain concessions to the opposition parties. For example, Ortega may support the opposition initiative to raise the threshold for a candidate to win the presidential election on the first round from 35% to 50% and reduce the number of National Assembly lawmakers.

Civil Society and Legislature Last Bastions of Defense

14. (C) According to Granera, the two remaining "dikes" capable of blocking Ortega's authoritarian onslaught are the National Assembly and civil society. The opposition parties must find some way of convincing at least 12 Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC) lawmakers to support them in the legislature, she said. Granera offered that only a united opposition comprising diverse, left, center, and right-leaning democratic parties -- with the endorsement of like-minded civil society organizations and private sector leaders -- can limit Ortega's advances. This movement should be tolerant and inclusive, inviting disaffected PLC militants and Sandinistas, including a growing number of Nicaraguans who voted for Ortega and are starting to regret their decision and question his intentions.

Priorities: Expansion, Leadership, Communications, Advocacy

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15. (C) In sharing her vision of the MpN, Granera listed the following priorities: improve internal organization; form strategic alliances with like-minded NGOs and political opposition parties; train MpN leaders and other supporters in leadership, communications, advocacy, outreach, and development; educate Nicaraguans on their rights and obligations; expand presence, including establishing five centers in Managua and expand operational presence in Nicaragua's remaining sixteen departments, as well as in Miami, Los Angeles, and San Jose, Costa Rica; and, gain long-term private sector and foreign donor support. She also mentioned the MpN's plans to conduct a series of "social audits" of the Ortega administration and avoid politicizing its criticism. (Note: The MpN offered a seminar on, and issued a full-page ad featuring its assessment of the Ortega Administration's first 60 days, as reported in Reftel).
May Day, May Day

16. (C) Granera confirmed that the MpN will join a number unions and other civil society groups, and opposition parties for a May Day rally. She explained that the planning committee includes a diverse assortment of organizations that span the political spectrum. The unions will lead the march, followed by civil society, and political parties taking up the rear. Thus far, the Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS), Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance (ALN), and the Conservative Party (PC) have signed on to the event. The committee is also planning on issuing a joint communique, and is seeking funds to cover the expense, she said.

Disappointment with Private Sector, Gratitude for Foreign Donors

17. (C) Granera shared her frustration over the reluctance of Nicaragua's business elites to contribute to MpN efforts. She attributes their demeanor to a combination of fear and indifference. She was receptive to PolCouns' suggestion that the MpN approach small and medium businesses for support, instead of relying so much on big business. She noted that

support from the National Endowment for Democracy, NDI, IRI, the U.S. Embassy, and the Open Society Institute, and the governments of Japan and Taiwan have been the backbone of the MpN's support. She mentioned the MpN is reaching out to Nordic donors and hopes to gain some additional support from these countries. Granera remarked that donors are reluctant to fund marches and other public expressions, which are so crucial to the movement. Granera shared her interest in visiting NGO leaders and USG government officials in the United States, perhaps with a few of the MpN's new board members.

Biographical Information

18. (C) Bio: Violeta Granera de Sandino was born in Leon, Nicaragua in 1951. During the 1980s Sandinista regime, her family left the country, residing in Guatemala and later in France, where she studied Sociology. She returned to Nicaragua in 1991 to work as deputy director of the Nicaraguan Pro Human Rights Association (ANPDH). Granera was the executive secretary of the National Commission for Social and Economic Planning (CONPES) starting in 2005. Previously, she served as a World Bank social development specialist, director of the Citizens' Initiative for Peace, and executive director of the Foundation for Democracy (FUNDEMOS).

Comment

19. (C) Although still a relatively new organization, the Movimiento, as it is commonly called, is now established and expanding. While during last year's electoral year the Movimiento was often criticized for holding a political agenda in favor of ALN presidential candidate Eduardo Montealegre, many of the MpN's members personally backed MRS presidential candidate Edmundo Jarquin. Granera's determination to reach out to all democratically-minded Nicaraguans, irrespective of their political stripes, is encouraging, and vital to her organization's future and its role in defending Nicaragua's vulnerable democracy.

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